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JOB

AN ORATORIO

FOR

TREBLE, TENOR, BARITONE AND BASS SOLI, CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

BY

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JOB.

INTRODUCTION.

SCENE I.

Narrator.

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. His substance was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the East. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their sisters to eat and drink with them.

And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said,

Job.

It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.

Narrator.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

And the Lord said to Satan,

Chorus.

Whence comest thou?

Narrator.

Then Satan answered the Lord, and said,

Satan.

From going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it.

Narrator.

And the Lord said to Satan,

Chorus.

Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, and one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Narrator.

Then Satan answered the Lord, and said,

Satan.

Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.

Narrator.

And the Lord said to Satan,

Chorus.

Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.

Narrator.

So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

SCENE II.

Shepherd Boy.

The flocks of my master are blessed of God;
No harm ever comes to the tender lambs or ewes;
They wander in the mountains, where no man's foot has trod,
They feed in shady valleys, on herb all fresh with dews:

The wind bites not,
The sun smites not,
And little care
Is the shepherd's share
Wherever, night or day,
The gentle sheep may stray.

The folds of my master are full to overflow;
His oxen are as stars in number—countless, lithe, and strong.
As far as eye can reach or a man by day might go
The herds are scattered far and wide, and no man does them wrong.

The wind bites not,
The sun smites not,
And little care
Is the shepherd's share
Wherever, night or day,
The gentle sheep may stray.
They need no guard,
God is their ward,
And ever is our master's help and stay

Satan.

Come, O Sabean horde! Come, and destroy! For God hath delivered the flocks and herds of Job into your hands.

Chorus.

See! upon the distant plain, a white cloud of dust:
The ravagers come!
See! where gleams the sun afar, the quick flash of steel,
The terror of men!
Hear the dreadful thunder of their horses' onward rush,
Shaking the earth!
Hear the shouts of spoilers and the clash of arms
Echoing far!
They sweep the herds before them,
They destroy the fruits of the earth,
They slay the flying shepherds,
They fire the dwellings of men!

As locusts gathering,
As hailstones rattling,
As sea waves thundering,
They heed not human cries,
They slack not speed or hand;
Before them all the land is bright,
Behind them, black and bare.

The song of the shepherd has ceased in the land,
The lowing of kine and the bleating of sheep
Is stilled.
O'er all the plains is silence!

Narrator.

And there came a messenger to Job and said:

Shepherd Boy.

The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them; and the Sabeans fell upon them, and drove them away; and they have slain thy servants with a sword, and I only am escaped to tell thee!

Narrator.

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and fell down upon the ground and said:

Job.

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Narrator.

And with all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Then Satan arose and cried:

Satan.

Arise, O wind of the sea!
From the womb of darkness
Where no man dwelleth;
From the ends of the earth
Which no man knoweth,
Hasten and come!

Arise, O wind of the desert!
From the heights of the mountains
Where snows dwell in silence!
From the depths of the valleys
Where light never enters;
From the spaces of Heaven,
From the caverns of Hell,
Hasten and come!

Arise, O Lord of the sky!
From the home of the thunder
Where fear is begotten!
From the birthplace of lightning
Whence leapeth destruction,
In the might of thy fury,
Spreading ruin and death,
Hasten and come!

Chorus.

See the clouds that sweep o'er the heavens; the earth is hid as with a veil!

Hear the roaring wind from the deep; the forest shaketh as a reed.

All the bright lights of heaven are made dark; the sun is covered up with cloud.

The heavens all are clothed with a garment of darkness; and the night and the day are as one.

The glory of the forest is thrown down; the earth shaketh at the fall thereof.

The boughs are broken by the rivers of the sky, and the rocks are rent from the heights of the hills.

The children lie slain in the house of feasting; a whirlwind passed over it, and the place thereof shall know it no more.

Lift up thy voice, O son of man, and cry.

The noise of the song ceaseth; the sound of the harp is no more heard.

The walls are broken down; destroyed are the pleasant houses. Where late was a garden is barren rock; where late a fruitful orchard is ruin and waste.

They that are left have clothed themselves with trembling; and the mourner dwelleth alone.

SCENE III.—THE LAMENTATIONS OF JOB.

Narrator.

Now when Job's friends heard of all the evil that was come on him, they came every one from his own place to comfort and mourn with him.

And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voices, and wept; and none spake word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

Then Job opened his mouth and cursed his day, and Job spake, and said:

Job.

Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.

Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day.

Why died I not from the womb? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept.

Where the wicked cease from troubling; and the weary are at rest.

There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

The small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?

How should a man be just with God? If he will contend with Him, he cannot answer Him one in a thousand.

He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against Him, and prospered?

He removeth the mountains, and they know not; and overturneth them in His anger.

He shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.

He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.

He alone spreadeth the heavens, and treadeth the waves of the sea.

He doeth great things past finding out, and wonders without number.

Lo, He goeth by me, and I see Him not; He passeth on also, but I perceive Him not.

My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore Thou contendest with me.

Is it good unto Thee that Thou shouldest oppress; that Thou shouldest despise the work of Thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?

Thine hands have made me and fashioned me round about; yet dost Thou destroy me.

Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death, where light is as darkness.

Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:

So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

O that I were as in the months past, as in the days when God preserved me;

When His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through the darkness.

When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me.

I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and diadem.

Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.

After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them.

I chose out their way, and sat chief, as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.

But now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of my affliction have taken hold upon me.

My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.

He hath cast me into the mire, I am become like dust and ashes.

I cry unto Thee, and Thou dost not hear me: I stand up, but Thou regardest me not.

Thou art become cruel unto me: and with Thy strong hand Thou opposest Thyself against me.

For I know that Thou wilt bring me unto death, and to the house appointed for all living.

SCENE IV.

Chorus.

Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Gird up thy loins like a man and answer.

Where wast thou when God laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast any understanding.

Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who hath laid the corner stone thereof?

When the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy?

Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

When God made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it,

And brake up for it His decreed place, and set bars and doors,

And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed!

Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;

That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in search of the depth?

Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of the waters, or a way for the lightning and the thunder;

To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man;

To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?

The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

He paweth the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength; he goeth on to meet the armed men.

He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

He swalloweth the ground in the fierceness of his rage; he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

Gird up thy loins like a man and answer.

Wilt thou disannul judgment, that thou mayest be righteous?

Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like His?

Deck not thyself with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath; and tread down the wicked in their place.

Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.

Then shall God also confess that thine own right hand can save thee.

Narrator.

Then Job answered the Lord, and said,

Job.

I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee.

I have uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, that I knew not.

I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee.

Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Narrator.

And it was so, that the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed;

And he blessed the end of Job more than his beginning.

And Job died, being old and full of years.

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